

Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

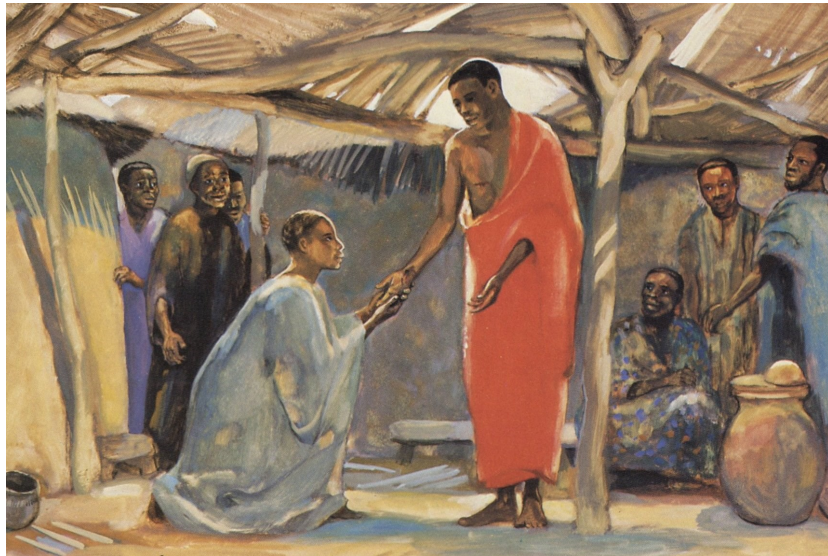
Like newborn children you should thirst for milk, on which your spirit can grow to strength.
Entrance Antiphon

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end. *Psalm*

Jesus said to Thomas: 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'
Gospel

Heavenly Father and God of Mercy
Increase in our minds and hearts
the risen life we share with Christ
and help us grow as your people
towards the fullness of eternal life with you.
Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Acts 2: 42–47; Psalm 117 (118); 1 Peter 1: 3–9; John 20: 19–31 3: 1–12

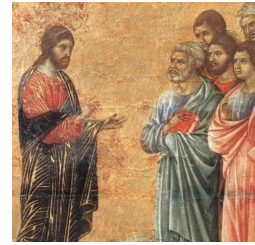


Jesus MAF.A. Jesus appears to Thomas
www.librarie-emmanuel.fr

Jesus came and stood among them ...
The disciples were filled with joy when they saw him.

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Second Sunday of Easter
Year A, 16th April, 2023

'As the Father sent me,
so I am sending you'

Today, with Thomas, we hail Christ as our *Lord and God*. We, too, ask to be filled with the joy and peace of the disciples in seeing the risen Lord.

The **First Reading** tells how effectively the lives of the first Christians are encouraged and transformed by their Spirit-filled faith. Their devout, generous sense of community is an inspiration to all who meet them.

Today's **Psalm** is considered '**the**' Easter psalm above all others. All Christians are invited to give thanks and praise to the Lord.

Peter, who was an eye-witness to the events of Easter (**Second Reading**), praises and encourages the faith of the new converts, even though they have never seen Jesus. Although they are persecuted and plagued by trials because of their new-found faith in Christ, they still love him deeply and are filled with a glorious joy.

The **Gospel** recounts the events of the first Sunday after Easter Day. Thomas is absent when the risen Lord appears to the other frightened disciples, offering them the resurrection gift of the Spirit of peace. But a week later, Jesus seeks out the doubting Thomas personally: an encounter that enables Thomas to proclaim Jesus as 'My Lord and my God!'.

This week, we pray for a deepening personal relationship with the risen Lord that can change our lives ... and for an openness that inspires us to take our active, living faith into our suffering world.



Opening Prayer

God of everlasting mercy,
who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast
kindle the faith of the people you have made your own,
increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed,
that all may grasp and rightly understand
in what font they have been washed,
by whose Spirit they have been reborn,
by whose Blood they have been redeemed.

First Reading Acts of the Apostles 2: 42–47

The whole community remained faithful to the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone.

The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

As I slow down in my own way, I allow my longing for the Lord's gaze to fall on me, conscious of its healing, transformative power. I allow myself to be fully 'seen' and vulnerable. I ask for a sense of home-coming and belonging. I wait in quiet.

I may feel drawn to stay in this receptive, contemplative space... aware of being part of the whole body of Christ. I follow where the Spirit leads me.

When ready, I read the text above, aloud if I can, to feel the words enter my senses and my heart. I linger on particular phrases.

Perhaps I get an overall sense of what it was like to be part of this emerging 'whole community' of early Christians. I sit in silence, allowing the word of God to speak to me in my own heart.

This community includes men, women and children, who had a vibrant, living faith in the crucified and risen Christ.

How am I called or challenged by this image? I consider my own Christian community or church.

Do I sometimes feel thwarted if I try to share my unique giftedness ... or perhaps unwelcome because of who I am ...?

Or maybe I am blessed with a deep sense of belonging? I ponder.

In trust and hope, I bring all of myself and what has arisen in my prayers to Christ Jesus, allowing his love to heal and transform me. I give thanks.

Glory be ...

Gospel John 20: 19–31 (part)

In the evening of that same day of the week, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you,' and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you.'

As the Father send me, so am I sending you.'

After saying this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord,' he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and put my fingers into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.'

Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you,' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!'

In silence, I step intentionally into my prayer space. I welcome the Lord's presence within and around me, allowing it to flow into my mind and heart.

I ask the Spirit of truth and peace to enlighten and lead me as I read this familiar passage.

Gently, I allow Jesus's presence and words into my own 'upper room'.

Perhaps this is a place where I know fear and resistance, like the disciples ...?

I hear Jesus say the words '*Peace be with you.*'

I repeat this phrase, adding my own name to it, seeking the same personal encounter with the risen Lord as Thomas received. Patiently, I wait.

Perhaps I find it easy to identify with Thomas, sharing something of his doubt and confusion about my own life and faith? In the presence of the Holy Spirit, I reflect on whatever arises.

I ask for the grace I need to lead me on that same journey of faith as Thomas, so that I, too, can say, *My Lord and my God ...*